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ABSTRACT

Based on a pilot research project conducted in the Spring of 1985, this report on an investigation of the use of television within different families, and how television material is interpreted by its audiences, begins by discussing the project's central thesis, i.e., that the changing patterns of television viewing can only be understood in the overall context of family leisure activity. Eighteen sets of parents, drawn from the Greater London area, were interviewed in their own homes in one-to-two-hour, tape-recorded interviews which included a discussion session with two or more dependent children up to the age of 18. The issues examined included: (1) increasingly varied uses of the household television set(s); (2) patterns of differential 'commitment' and response to particular types of programming; (3) the dynamics of television within the family; and (4) the relationship between television watching and other dimensions of family life. Identified as the one structural principle working across all the families, gender is discussed in terms of eight recurring themes that arose consistently in the interviews. In conclusion it is noted that the research project offers a picture of the intermeshing of television viewing and domesticity primarily in only one socio-cultural context, that of the working class/lower middle class white nuclear family in an urban setting. A table showing sample details from the study is appended. (3 end notes) (CGD)

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Family Television:

Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure

David Morley

Paper presented to the 1986
International Television Studies Conference

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Preface

This paper is based on a pilot research project, funded by the IBA, which was conducted in the Spring of 1985, investigating TV viewing in a small number of families from different social backgrounds.(1) Because of the small size of the sample (and the restricted definition of household type employed in its construction) care must be taken in attempting to generalise from my findings. The research was of a preliminary nature, and used qualitative techniques, aiming to pursue issues about programme preference and viewing behaviour in depth, so as to raise questions which could usefully be pursued at a later stage, both in extended qualitative work (with both a broader sample, and hopefully with participant observation rather than simply being intervieew based as my work was) and in survey work.

As with many research projects, this one not only raises more questions than it answers, but also fails to pursue effectively all the possible dimensions of analysis of its own data. Thus, below I attempt to outline a new conceptual model for the understanding of TV viewing in the domestic context, but in the later analysis I have been unable to operationalise effectively all the theoretical consequences of this model. Moreover, I am aware that my later analysis of the interviews focuses centrally (and almost exclusively) on only one dimension of analysis - the effectivity of gender as an influence on viewing behaviour. Here I can only recognise that I have been unable (due both to theoretical

and practical limitations) to pursue a more developed analysis of the patterning of viewing behaviour as between the different categories of families interviewed - either in terms of the categories of social background or the categories of family `life-stage' which constituted the parameters along which the sample was originally constructed.

I can only hope that the conceptual model offered will be useful to others working in this field, that my specific comments on TV and gender will be thought worthy of some debate, and that others will go on to pursue these questions in further research.(2)

Introduction

Centrally, I have been concerned to investigate 2 different types of questions - concerning, on the one hand how television is used within different families, and on the other hand, how TV material is interpreted by its audience.

Questions of interpretation and questions of use have not previously been investigated in relation to each other. In the past they have been the exclusive provinces of different research traditions - the one within the realm of literary/semiological perspectives, the other within the field of sociological leisure-studies. Myresearch was designed to overcome this unproductive form of segregation, in the belief that only a more holistic research perspective - which takes account of both kinds of issues - could successfully pursue these urgent questions about the television audience.

The central thesis was that the changing patterns of television viewing could only be understood in the overall context of family leisure activity. Previous work in this area has tended to focus too narrowly on one or another side of a pair of inter-linked issues which need, in fact, to be considered together: these are the issues of how viewers make sense of the materials they view, and the social (and primarily familial) relations within which viewing is conducted.

Too often, the fact that television is pre-eminently a domestic medium, and that viewing is largely done in the family is either ignored, or is registered, only to be assumed away as a pre-given backdrop to the activity, rather than being directly investigated. Television viewing may be a privatised form of activity, by comparison with cinema going for example, but it is still largely conducted within, rather than outside of, social relations.

In this research, I attempted to build upon some of the insights of the `used and gratifications' approach to audience research - asking `what people do with the media' - but taking the unit of consumption to be more properly the family/household rather than the individual viewer. This is to raise questions about how the television set is handled in the home, how decisions are made - by which family members - at what times - as to `what to watch' - and how responses to different kinds of material are discussed within the family, etc. In short, this represents an attempt to analyse individual viewing activity within household/familial relations in which it commonly operates. Audience research which ignores this context cannot comprehend a number of key determinations relating to both viewing `choices' and responses - these involve questions of differential power, responsibility and control within the family , at different times of the day or evening.

My further premise is that the use of the television set has to be understood in the wider context of the other, competing and complementary, leisure activities (hobbies, interests, pastimes, etc.) in which viewers are engaged. Television clearly is a primary leisure activity, but previous research has tended merely to investigate leisure-options as a range of separate and unrelated activities to be listed, rather than to investigate the relations between `watching television' and other domestic and leisure activities.

Investigating how television is being used

`Watching television' cannot be assumed to be a one-dimensional activity which has equivalent meaning or significance at all times for all who perform it. I was also concerned to identify and investigate the differences hidden behind the description `watching television'-both the differences between the choices made by different kinds of viewers in relation to different viewing options, and the differences (of attention and comprehension) between different viewers' responses to the same viewing materials. One important set of differences explored in the project concerns the different levels of attention given to different programmes by different viewers - differences which are masked by the finding that they all `watched' a given programme.

I was concerned to explore both differences within families -

between their different members - and differences between families in different social and cultural contexts. I would argue that it is only in this context - that of the wider fields of social and cultural determinations which frame the practices of viewing - that individual `choices' and `responses' can be understood.

In particular, this project was designed to explore in detail, within a deliberately limited universe the `how' and `why' questions which lie unexplained behind the patterns of viewing behaviour revealed by large scale survey work (eg. the grounds of, and differential criteria employed in, particular viewing choices).

In short, by investigating how factors such as programme type, family position and cultural background interrelate to produce the dynamics of family viewing behaviour and responses I aimed to produce a more developed conceptual model of viewing behaviour in the context of family leisure which would then be available for testing across a wider sample.

TV in the family

We are, in short, discussing TV viewing in the context of domestic life, which as we all know is a somewhat complex matter. To expect that we could treat the individual viewer making programme choices as if he or she were the rational consumer in a free and perfect market is surely the height of

absurdity when we are talking of people who live in families (unless my own experience of families is for some reason, unrepresentative). After all, for most people, viewing takes place within the context of what Sean Cubitt has called `the politics of the living room' where, as he puts it "if the camera pulls us in, the family pulls us out", and where the people you live with are likely to disrupt, if not shatter, your communion with the `box in the corner' (in L. Masterman (ed) `TV Mythologies', Comedia, 1985 p.48).

Let us consider the problem from another angle:

"Early in the evening we watch very little TV. Only when my husband is in a real rage. He comes home, hardly says anything and switches on the TV"

(Bausinger, `Media, Technology and Daily Life' in Media, Culture, Society, 1984.6.p344)

As Bausinger notes, in this case "pushing the button doesn't signify `I would like to watch this', but rather `I would like to see and hear nothing'" or "I don't want to talk to anybody" (op.cit. p344). Conversely, he notes, later, the opposite case where "the father goes to his room, while the mother sits down next to her eldest son and watches the sports review with him. It does not interest her, but it is an attempt at making contact." (op.cit.p349)

Lindof and Traudt (`Mediated Communication in Families', in M.Mander (ed)`Communications in Transition', Praeger, 1983)

extend this perspective to make a very basic point about the problems with a lot of media research to date. They note that much research has concentrated on "questions of why, to the exclusion of what and how ... (Scholars) have attempted to describe causes and consequences of televiewing without an adequate understanding of what it is and how it gets done" (op.cit.p262.) They rightly argue that in fact, in order for "many of the central theoretical and policy questions to be satisfactorily framed, let alone answered, a number of prerequistie questions concerning what the act of TV viewing entails (my emphasis - DM) for all family members, need to be posed and investigated" (op.cit.p.261)

The dominant image of the relationship between the family and the media in general is one in which the media are seen as having a primarily disruptive effect on household routines and family relationships. In this picture the media's influence is seen as primarily negative and disruptive. However, it is perfectly possible to pose this issue the other way round. Rather than simply thinking of television having a disruptive effect on the household, one can examine the ways in which television provides family members with different schedules for gathering, the ways in which television provides acceptable zones for private pursuits, the ways in which television programming does not so much intrude on existing family activitiees as provide organizing

centres or focusses for new types of communicative contexts.

Lindlof and Traudt attempt to develop a model of television viewing which is sensitive to the different levels of attentiveness which are paid to the set by different family members in different roles, in relation to different types of programming. They are trying to get away from any notion of the television set simply dominating family life for all its members in an equal way while it is switched on. They are also trying to get away from the notion that people are either living in their social relations or watching television - as if these two activities were mutually exclusive. Rather, what they're interested in is the way in which the familial roles interact with television viewing. Besides these authors' work one further strand of work is worth noting as relevant to my concerns - this is the work of James Lull in the USA. One of the things which Lull investigates is "Who is responsible for the selection of television programmes at home, how programme selection processes occur, and how the roles of family position and family communication patterns influence these activities." (Lull `How families select TV programmes' Journal of Broadcasting, Vol.26.4, p801). The fundamental point at issue here concerns the fact that viewing is often non selective, in so far as viewers often watch programmes that are selected by someone else in the family. This is often referred to as "enforced viewing", hardly an uncommon situation in any context in which there is more than one

person involved in the viewing group! The point is that programme selection decisions often are complicated interpersonal communication activities involving inter-family status relations, temporal context, the number of sets available and rule based communications conventions (cf Lull op.cit p802). Here we approach the central question of power. And within any patriarchal society the power at issue will necessarily be that of the father. This perspective involves us in considering the ways in which familial relations, like any other social relations, are also and inevitably power relations. Lull's central finding in his survey of control of the television set was that fathers were named (not surprisingly) most often as the person who controlled the selection of television programmes. Children and mothers were more likely to regard fathers this way than were the fathers themselves (again hardly surprisingly!). Lull found that fathers controlled more programme decisions than any other single family member,(or combination of family viewers) and that they were more than twice as likely as their wives to control such decisions. Indeed, fathers were found to act alone on their programme decisions in more than 90% of the cases observed. One of the children was the next most likely to turn the set on or turn it off or change the channels. Mothers were observed to be far less involved in the actual manipulation of the set (cf. my own findings later) than were either their husbands or children. Indeed, mothers were initiaters of programme decisions or actions of

this type in a very small percentage of cases, and they were less likely than either fathers or children to undertake such actions or decisions alone. In essence, as Lull puts it "The locus of control in programme selection processs can be explained primarily by family position" (Lull op.cit p809). Thus, to consider the ways in which viewing is performed within the social relations of the family is also, inevitably, to consider the ways in which viewing is performed within the context of power relations and the differential power afforded to members of the family in different roles - whether in terms of gender or in terms of age.

Summary of Research Project

My research project was designed to investigate the changing uses of television among a sample of families of different types, drawn from a range of social positions. It was designed to investigate the following issues, in terms of the differences between families in different social positions, and betweeen families with children of different ages in relation to:

(a) the increasingly varied `uses' of the household TV set(s) - for receiving broadcast TV; video games; teletext; etc.

(b) patterns of differential `commitment' and response to particular types of programming

(c) the dynamics of TV use within the family: how viewing choices are expressed and negotiated within the family; the differential power of particular family members in relation to viewing choices at different times of the day; the ways in which TV material is discussed within the family

(d) the relations between TV watching and other dimension of family life: TV as a source of information on leisure choices; leisure interests and work obligations (both inside and outside the home) as determinants of viewing choices

The project was designed to identify and investigate, among other issues, the differences hidden behind the catch-all description `watching television'. We all `watch television', but with how much attention and what degrees of commitment and response, in relation to which types of programming, in which scheduling spots?

Moreover, we are now in a situation where watching broadcast television is only one among various possible uses of the domestic TV set. Among the questions I set out to explore were the following: which family members, in which types of families use their TV(s) for which purposes at which points in the day? What are the factors which give rise to these different patterns, and how are they understood by respondents themselves? Further, how are the differing priorities and preferences of different family members negotiated and resolved in relation to conflicting demands on the use of the TV, and in relation to conflicting particular viewing preferences? In short, how do family dynamics interact with viewing behaviour?

Methodology

In this pilot project the methodology adopted was a qualitative one, whereby each family was interviewed in depth in order to elucidate their (various) accounts of how they understood the role of television in their overally leisure activities. By this means, my aim was to gain insight into

the terms within which my respondents themselves defined their viewing activities. Centrally, I aimed to thus generate insights into the criteria used by viewers in making choices and in responding (positively or negatively) to different types of programming and scheduling. Thus it was hoped that the project would provide a useful complement to the results of survey work which itself, while usefully detailing the overall pattern of viewing choices made, cannot hope to explain why these choices and responses are made.

The fact that the interviews were conducted `en famille' doubtless means that respondents did feel a certain need to play out accepted roles, and doubtless interviews with family members separately would bring out other responses. However, I was precisely interested in how they functioned as families, within (and against) their roles - that is the point about taking the family rather than the individual as the unit of consumption.

Research - Procedure

18 families were interviewed in their own homes during the spring of 1985. All were white, and were drawn from within the Greater London area. All consisted of households with 2 adults living together with 2 or more dependent children, up to the age of 18. All possessed a video recorder. Within this standardised framework, the sample was divided so as to allow for comparisions and contrasts between

(a) families in different social positions and (b) families with children at different ages.

Initially the 2 parents were interviewed, then later in each interview their children were invited to take part in the discussion along with their parents. The interviews, which lasted between 1-2 hours, were tape-recorded and then transcribed for analysis.

The limitations of my budget meant that it was only possible to have a very small sample, all recruited within one, quite small, geographical area.
Because of the nature of my sample I would not be in any position to claim that my results provide a true and valid picture of the UK population's viewing habits as a whole (for one thing, all my sample are traditional nuclear families, which in fact represent only a minority of UK households) but I would claim that my sample provides a reasonable picture of viewing patterns within white working class/lower middle class nuclear families in a stable inner city environment.

The particularity of my sample can be specified quite simply. Because of the nature of theparticular area of South London where respondents were recruited the sample contains a very high proportion of working class/lower middle class families - not necessarily in terms of income (my sample includes quite a wide range of income) but in terms of all the other

aspects of class (cultural capital, education, etc). Thus my B/C1 respondents are builders who've `made good' rather than educated professionals - the absence of this category of people from my sample is one of its most obvious limitations.

All this has an obvious bearing on the strength of the gender differentation within the families in my sample. I am not arguing that all families in the UK repeat this pattern (indeed, I would be amazed if it was repeated among more highly educated professional families). I am claiming that, as far as the families in my sample are concerned, gender differentiation, and very traditional sex role stereotyping, are very strong, and that among families of this type this has all the consequence which I refer to later in terms of viewing patterns.

Precise details of the sample are given in Appendix I.

Television and Gender

The interviews identified the following major themes which all recur across the interviews with the different families, where I can point to a reasonable degree of consistency of response. Clearly, the one structural principle working across all the families interviewed is that of gender, These interviews raise important questions about the effects of gender in terms of:

1. Style of viewing
2. Power and control over viewing process
3. Planned and unplanned viewing
4. Channel preference
5. Programme choice
6. National v. local news
7. Technology: the use of the video
8. Solo viewing/guilty pleasures

1. Styles of Viewing

One major finding is the consistency of the distinction between the characteristic ways in which men and women describe their viewing activity. Essentially, the men state a clear preference for viewing attentively, in silence, without interruption `in order not to miss anything'. Moreover, they display puzzlement at the way their wives and daughters watch TV. This, the women themselves describe as a funamentally social activity, involving ongoing conversation, and usually the performance of at least one other domestic

activity (ironing, etc.) at the same time. Indeed, many of the women feel that to just watch TV, without doing anything else at the same time would be an indefensible waste of time, given their sense of their ongoing domestic obligations. To watch in this way is something they rarely do - except occasionally, when alone, or with other women friends, when they have managed to construct an `occasion' on which to watch their favoured programme, video or film (cf. below). The women note that their husbands are always `on at them' to shut up; the men can't really understand how their wives can follow the programmes if they're doing something else at the same time.

Man: "I can't concentrate if there's anyone talking while I'm watching. But they can, they can watch and just talk at the same time .. I just watch it - & take it all in - if you talk .. you've missed the bit that's really worth watching - I listen to every bit of it .. my attitude is sort of go in the other room if you want to talk"

Woman: "Because we have it on all the time its like second nature .. we watch, and chat at the same time"

Man: "I like to watch it without aggravation. I'd rather watch on my own - if its just something I want to watch, I like to watch everything with no talking at all"

Woman: "I can't think of anything I'll totally watch - I don't just sit and watch - I'll probably sew - maybe knit, I

very rarely just sit - that's just not me"

As Charlotte Brunsden argues (`Women and the Electronic Mass Media', conference paper, Spring 1986, unpublished) these different styles of viewing - the concentrated masculine gaze (much like the model of public cinema viewing) and the distracted feminine glance - are not natural or essential attributes of men and women as biological entities. Rather they are simply the effects of the differential power of men and women in the domestic sphere, under the current arrangements of family life in the majority of nuclear families.

2. Power and Control of the Viewing Process

Masculine power is evident in a number of the families as the ultimate determinant on occasions of conflict over viewing choices (Man: "we discuss what we all want to watch and the biggest wins. That's me, I'm the biggest!") More crudely, this is even more apparent in the case of those families who have an automatic control device. None of the women in any of the families use the automatic control regularly. A number of them complain that their husbands use the channel control device obsessively, channel-flicking across programmes when their wives are trying to watch something in particular. Characteristrically, the control device is the symbolic possession of the Father (or of the son, in the Father's absence) which sits `on the arm of Daddy's chair' and is used almost exclusively by him. It is a highly visible symbol of

condensed power relations (the descendant of the medieval mace perhaps?).

Daughter: "Dad keeps both of the automatic controls (one for TV channels , one for video) one on each side of his chair"

Woman: "Well I don't get much chance because he (her husband - DM) sits there with the automatic control beside him and that's it"

3. Planned and Unplanned Viewing

It is the men, on the whole, who speak of checking through the paper (or the teletext) to plan their evening's viewing. Very few of the women seem to do this at all - except in terms of knowing already which evenings/times their favourite series are on, and thus not needing to check the schedule. This is also an indication of a different attitude to viewing as a whole. Many of the women have a much more `take-it-or-leave-it' attitude, not caring that much if they miss things (except `their' serials).

Woman: "I don't read newspapers. If I know what's going to be on, I'll watch it. (My husband) tends to look in the paper - I don't actually look in the paper to see what's on"

Man: "Evening times, I go through the paper and I've got all my programmes sorted out"

4. Channel Preferences

There is a tendency for men to claim to prefer BBC (and in some cases BBC2) rather than ITV, and for women to do the opposite. This has got some connection with the dominant connotations of BBC as `educational' and ITV as `entertaining' - thus these stated channel preferences are parallel to the programme genre preferences explained below. These statements about `channel loyalty' are not to be interpreted as simple empirical statements - not least because often, the men, having stated a clear preference for BBC, will then go on to enthuse about programmes which are, in fact on ITV! However, these statements are still very significant - if only as indicators of the primary connotations associated with each channel. The point is (to return to the example above) when the man then refers to ITV programmes he tends to be speaking of programmes which are, (in fact) on ITV, but which he would have expected to be on BBC, in terms of his understanding of what type of programmes each channel primarily offers. The converse is true for many of the women, who state a clear preference for ITV, and then go on to enthuse about BBC programmes. Again, the BBC programmes they enthuse about tend to be the type of entertainment programmes which are primarly associated in their minds with ITV.

Woman: "ITV its got to be for me .. BBC will only go on for Wogan or something like that"

Man: "They (ie. his wife and daughters) all tend to watch ITV, but I think BBC2's got a lot of good things".

5. Programme Choice

My respondents displayed a notable consistency, whereby the men consistently claimed a strong preference for `factual' programmes (news, current affairs, documentaries) and the women expressed an equally strong preference for fictional programmes. The observation may be banal, but the strength of the consistency displayed here was remarkable, whenever respondents were asked about programme preferences, and especially when asked which programmes they'd make a point of `being in' for, and viewing attentively.

Man: "I like all documentaries ... I like watching stuff like that ... I can watch fiction but I am not a great lover of it."

Women: "Things I like least are things like World in Action, when it's more political - the Money Pprogramme - there's too much talking. On the whole I don't bother too much with those kind of programmes, I don't like documentaries - I like something with a story, entertainment, variety"

The argument also extends further. Firstly, there is refrain, among the men, that watching fiction in the way that

their wives do is an improper (and almost `irresponsible') activity, an indulgence in fantasy of which they disapprove (cf.19th century views of novel-reading function as a `feminising' activity). Moreover the men's programme genre preference (in terms of factual programmes) is also itself framed by a sense of guilt about the fact that watching TV is a `second-best' choice in itself - in relation to a strong belief (not shared in the same way by the majority of the women) that watching television at all is `second-best' to `real' leisure activity (clearly this is related to cultural notions of masculinity as an `action-based' construct) .

Overall the responses in my sample seem to fit into a very simple - syllogism of masculine/feminine relationships to TV:

Masculine	Feminine
Activity	Watching TV
Fact programmes	Fiction programmes
Realism	Romance

A further note of caution should perhaps be entered here in so far as readers may feel that my respondents' accounts offer a more sharply stereotyped representation of gendered viewing behaviour than is borne out by their own experience - for instance, in relation to the marked tendency ~~accounted~~ for men to claim to be almost exclusively interested in factual programming. Even if it could be successfully argued that my results misrepresent the actual viewing behaviour of these men, it would remain of considerable interest that

these were the particular accounts of their behaviour that these men felt constrained to give. At minimum, the accounts demonstrate the very great difficulty that these men experience in admitting to any strong interest in fiction (other than in `adventure' films perhaps), in so far as they seem to feel that to admit such an interest would be to undermine their very masculinity.

6. National and Local News Programming

As has been noted, it is men and not women who tend to claim an interest in news programming. Interestingly, this pattern varies when we consider local news programmes, which a number of the women claim to like. They give, in several cases, very cogent reasons for this - eg. as they don't understand what the `pound going up or down' is about, and as it has no experential bearing on their lives, they're not interested in it. However, if there's been a crime (eg. a rape) in their local area, they feel they need to know about it, both for their own sake and their children's sakes - which connects directly to their other expressed interest - in programmes like `Police 5' , or programmes warning of domestic dangers. In both these kinds of cases the programme material has a practical value to them in terms of their domestic responsibilities, and thus they will make a point of watching it. Conversely, they see themselves as having no practical relation to the area of national and international politics preseented in the main news and therefore don't

watch it.

Woman: "What I read in the papers and listen to the News is enough for me, I don't want to know about the Chancellor somebody in Germany and all that - when I've seen it once I don't want to see it again - I hate seeing it again - because it's on at breakfast time, dinner time, and tea time you know, the same News all day long, it bores me. What's going on in the world? I don't understand it all so I don't like to listen to that. (But..) those little kids - that gets to me, I want to know - or if there's actually some crime in (this area), like rapes and all the rest of it, I want to read up on that, if they've been caught and locked away. But as for like when the guy says, the pound's gone up and the pound's gone down - I don't want to know about all that - because I don't understand it - it's complete ignorance really - if I was to understand it all I probably would get interested in it".

7. Technology - The Use of The Video Machine

Few of the women operate their video machine themselves to any great extent, relying on their husband or children to operate it for them. This is simply an effect of their cultural formation as `ignorant' and `disinterested' in relation to machinery in general, and is therefore an obvious point, but one with profound effects, nonetheless. Videos, like automatic control panels, are largely seen, among my

sample as the possessions of fathers and sons (and, occasionally, of teenage daughters whose education has made them more confident with technology than their mothers).

Women: "I always ask him to do it for me because I can't, I always do it wrong. I've never bothered with it"

Man: "I use it most - me and the boys more than anything mostly to tape the racing and the pool.

8. `Solo' Viewing and Guilty Pleasures

The tip of the iceberg here is represented by a number of women who explain that their greatest pleasure is to be able to watch `a nice weepie', (or their favourite serial) when the rest of the family aren't there. Only then do they feel free enough of their domestic responsibilities to `indulge' themselves in the kind of attentive viewing which their husbands engage in routinely. Here we enter the territory identified by Brodie and Stoneman (see Journal of Family Issues, June 1983) who found that mothers tended to maintain their role as `domestic manager' across programme types, as opposed to their husband's tendency to abandon their manager/parent role when viewing material of particular interest to them. The point is expressed most clearly by the woman (see below) who explains that she particularly enjoys watching early morning TV at the weekends . As this is the only occasion on which her husband and sons `sleep in', this is, by the same token, the only occasion when she can watch TV attentively, without keeping half an eye on the needs of the others.

Woman: "I love Saturday morning breakfast television. I'm on my own, because noone gets up till late - I come down and really enjoy that programme."

The actual iceberg concealed here is of a lumpier kind, and relates to the guilt that most of these women feel about their own pleasures. They are, on the whole, prepared to concede that the drama and soap opera they like is `silly' or `badly acted' or inconsequential - that is, they accept the terms of a masculine hegemony which defines their own preferences as having a low status. Having accepted these terms, they then find it hard to argue for their preference in a conflict (because, by definition, what their husband wants to watch is more prestigious). They then deal with this by watching their programmes, where possible, on their own, or only with their women friends, and will fit such arrangements into the crevices of their domestic timetables.

Woman: "What I like really is typical American trash I suppose, but I love it."

Woman: "I feel guilty if I push for what I want to see because (My husband) and the boys want to see the same thing, rather than what a mere woman would want to watch . . if there was a love film on I'd be happy to see it and they wouldn't. Its like when you go to pick up a video, instead

of getting a nice sloppy love story, I think I can't get that, because of the others. I'd feel guilty watching it - because I think, I'm getting my pleasure whilst the others aren't getting any pleasure, because they're not interested."

Conclusion

I can only conclude by restating some of the concerns expressed at the beginning of this paper. Having moved on, in my own work, from the 'Nationwide' project (3) where the audience interviews were conducted in public, educational settings to this project, where the interviews were conducted in the homes of people who normally watch TV together, I do feel that it has been possible to gather more of the relevant clues as to what is entailed in TV viewing - given, precisely, that TV is a domestic medium. Beyond that, I would not claim to have discovered anything that one could not find some part of in one's own sitting room. My research simply demonstrates that TV viewing cannot be properly understood in abstraction from all the complex processes of domestic life, not outside of the web of social (and power) relations which constitute domesticity, especially in relation to gender.

I conclude by noting only that this research project offers a picture of the intermeshing of TV viewing and domesticity primarily in one socio-cultural context: that of the working class/lower middle class white nuclear family in an urban context. The next step, in my view, would be to investigate

how matters differ in other contexts - in other types of households, drawn from other social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Only then will we begin to have an adequate (and properly differentiated) picture of how al the various section of the TV audience actually watch television.

Notes

(1) The full write-up of this research project will be published by Comedia in the Autumn of 1986 as `Family Television - Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure'.

(2) The background to this project can be traced most directly to the work of Tania Modleski, Janice Radway, Ien Ang, Dorothy Hobson and Charlotte Brunsdon. In terms of contemporary research (much of which will be discussed elsewhere in this conference) this project shares a number of concerns with the current work of Peter Collet, Ann Gray, Valerie Walkerdine and Laurie Taylor.

(3) See `Nationwide: Everyday TV', Charlotte Brunsdon and David Morley, BFI, 1979 and `The Nationwide Audience', David Morley, BFI, 1980.

Appendix 1

SAMPLE DETAILS

	FAMILY	FAMILY INCOME	JOB(HoH)	AGE LEFT EDN (H.H.)	HOME STATUS
B	F16	£11k	Builder(S-E)	19years	Owner(O)
	F11	£12k	Manager	18yrs	O
	F8	£15.5k	Carpenter/ Builder(S-E)	15yrs	O
	F4	u	Ex-Furniture Dealer	19yrs	O
C_1	F9	£16.5k	Salesman (S-E)	15yrs	O (ex.council)
	F14	£11.5	Caretaker	16yrs	O
	F15	£17k	Decorator(S-E)	16yrs	Tenant(T)
C_2	F17	£12k	Fitter	17yrs	T
	F13	£12k	Caretaker	15yrs	T
	F18	£7.5k+	Builder(S-E)	15yrs	T
	F12	£13k	B Telecom Technician	15yrs	O (ex.council)
	F10	£10k	Postman	17yrs	T
	F7	£8k	Service Engineer	14yrs	O
U	F6	u	Ex-builder	16yrs	T
	F5	u	Ex-ambulance worker	14yrs	T
	F3	u	Ex-landscape garderner	15yrs	T
	F2	u	Ex-Decorator	15yrs	T
	F1	u	Ex-Caretaker	16yrs	T

Note:

1. The class categorisations have been made by means of what is, in the end, an intuitive judgement - whereby class is assessed as a factor of income x educational background x cultural capital x home status. A simple income calculation would produce a different categorisation

2. The sample is, unfortunately, rather restricted at the top end of the scale - it lacks any substantial representation of the higher-educated, professional classes (yuppies, et al)